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Chairman: Mr. Suazo ..... (Honduras)

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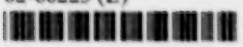

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 88: Operational activities for development (*continued*) (A/57/3, Supplement No. 3 (Part II), A/57/125, A/57/155, A/57/332, A/57/444, A/C.2/57/3)

Agenda item 43: Follow-up to the outcome of the special session on children (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Belkas** (Algeria) shared the view that operational activities for development should be adapted to meet the challenges of globalization. The African continent had adopted the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) as a collective mechanism which required the assistance of the international community and, in particular, of United Nations funds and programmes.

2. His delegation was pleased that expenditure on development cooperation by the United Nations system had grown between 2000 and 2001 to $7.1 billion, or by 17 per cent. However, that amount was still not enough to optimize the impact of multilateral, impartial and universal operational activities. To that end, the core resources of the funds and programmes should be augmented on a predictable, continuous and assured basis, and non-core funding should complement regular resources.

3. Algeria shared the concern expressed by the Secretary-General on reform of operational activities undertaken since 1997. Reforms must be pursued rigorously and realistically, ensuring the mobilization of adequate financial resources to allow the funds and programmes to finance their activities and to accomplish their missions. Follow-up to the International Conference on Financing for Development and to the Plan of Implementation, adopted at Johannesburg, could offer new perspectives for the mobilization of resources in the broader context of strengthening United Nations operational activities for development. The potential contribution of those activities to developing countries was indisputable. Greater mobilization of all partners was necessary in order to ensure the realization of objectives while ensuring adequate and reliable funding.

4. **Mr. Nadai** (Israel) said that his delegation had taken note of the report on the activities of the United Nations Development Fund for Women contained in document A/57/125, and the report of the Director-General of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (A/57/184) on implementation of General Assembly resolution 55/187.

5. With specific reference to gender, he described his Government's action to address the particular concerns of women in poverty and their access to power, influence and material resources. The Golda Meir Mount Carmel International Training Center (MCTC), established in 1961, specialized in gender issues and women in development. Although it had maintained its original emphasis on human resource development, the Center had expanded its activities to include programmes on income generation and entrepreneurship, community development, early childhood education, and leadership skills for women. The Center's integrated approach to training had resulted in effective new approaches and techniques in development programmes abroad. It had also promoted the concepts of gender equality and full participation in the development process as a prerequisite for economic growth. As agreed in Agenda 21, poverty eradication was the greatest global challenge facing the world. The role of the State of Israel, through MCTC, in tackling gender issues, enhancing the contribution of women to development, and involving the grassroots population in the decision-making process had been a pertinent and vital part of that struggle.

6. **Ms. Lachance** (Canada), with reference to the recommendations of the Secretary-General on pledging mechanisms, said that Canada was strongly committed to supporting United Nations operational activities for development.

7. Canada shared the view that the existing annual United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities had not been effective. On the other hand, the multi-year funding frameworks (MYFFs) had successfully attracted a large number of donors, many of whom had increased their contributions, and improved the predictability of resources available.

8. Canada welcomed the suggestion that a series of separate pledging sessions should be held sequentially under the MYFFs, or their equivalent, in a single time frame, and that those events should be held in the context of a joint meeting of the Executive Boards of United Nations Development Programme/United Nations Fund for Population Activities and United Nations Children's Fund, with the participation of the World Food Programme.

9. The pledging event should continue to be an integral part of the MYFF process and of the dialogue on programmatic results. A well-structured joint meeting of the Executive Boards, with a substantive agenda and pledging session, would be able to attract high-level participation. Moreover, with respect to the suggestions on high-level events on international development cooperation, a selective ad hoc approach to such meetings would lead to higher political and public visibility than a more rigid institutional approach.

10. **Mr. Huang** Xuegi (China) said that the steady decline in core resources had crippled the ability of funds and programmes to effectively assist development efforts and, in that regard, urged donor countries to increase official development assistance (ODA), particularly with respect to the least developed countries. Furthermore, his delegation believed that, in considering alternatives to the annual Pledging Conference, the root cause of reduced funding should be examined.

11. China attached great importance to South-South cooperation, both at the bilateral level and through active multilateral cooperation, and welcomed the various arrangements which promoted the participation of developing countries in the global economy.

12. **Mr. Adhikari** (Nepal) said that Nepal concurred with the conclusions and recommendations of the Secretary-General in document A/57/155, regarding the promotion and facilitation of South-South cooperation. The rationale for enhanced cooperation among developing countries had remained strong, but globalization had made that imperative more urgent.

13. Although the United Nations had been instrumental in creating improvements, there was need for sustained efforts to provide technical and other assistance in order to ensure tangible benefits for developing countries. Apart from capacity-building, the least developed countries must have free access to global markets. In that regard, Nepal urged the international community to do its utmost to implement the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2001-2010.

14. Landlocked developing countries faced the unique problems of geographical remoteness and costly development. Nepal therefore welcomed United Nations support for the preparatory process for the International Ministerial Meeting on Transit Transport Cooperation to be held in Kazakhstan in 2003 and other international events, and looked forward to urgent action to bridge the digital divide and the gap between developing countries themselves. Nepal wished to call for further support for the implementation of the outcome of those meetings.

15. **Mr. Mizukami** (Japan) welcomed the report presenting alternative options to the current annual Pledging Conferences. However, Japan did not favour the option of holding high-level events under the aegis of either the General Assembly or the Economic and Social Council, because of the additional physical and logistical costs involved. Since pledges were usually made after much discussion, their announcement would entail the creation of a system for the reporting of pledges. If, on the other hand, pledges were to be meaningful and accompanied by dialogue, they should be made during the proceedings of each governing mechanism.

16. As the largest donor of ODA, Japan remained committed to its pledging obligations and sought to maintain a relationship of trust with its partners. Consequently, all pledges were confirmed in advance by relevant budgetary offices within the Government. In the belief that a stable and predictable level of financial resources was crucial to the effective implementation of operational activities, Japan was pleased to note the current trend indicating an expansion of the donor community.

17. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on measures to promote and facilitate South-South cooperation (A/57/155), he recalled that for decades Japan had significantly increased such cooperation activities through bilateral and multilateral assistance. Despite the progress made, the United Nations could further promote such cooperation, which represented one of the most promising modalities for coping with difficulties facing many countries.

18. In terms of gender mainstreaming, Japan welcomed the contribution of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). For its part, the Government of Japan had provided approximately $3 million in assistance through the Trust Fund for Human Security to UNIFEM regional projects on HIV/AIDS, and had recently taken a decision to support the establishment of community centres in Afghanistan. Japan hoped to strengthen cooperation in

policy formulation aimed at assisting women in development.

19. He briefly described his Government's level of participation in development activities, through bilateral and multilateral projects, showing that Japan ranked among the top donors in various categories of assistance.

20. Accountability and effectiveness of operational activities should be enhanced to meet the needs of those persons who were truly in distress. United Nations organizations were expected to implement projects in the field, rather than expend their energies on organizing events that did not yield firm improvement in well-being.

21. Japan supported results-based management and all United Nations efforts to achieve the Millennium development goals through operational activities.

22. **Mr. Djumala** (Indonesia) said that the process of implementing the Millennium development goals, the Monterrey Consensus and the Plan of Implementation of the World Summit on Sustainable Development required both human and financial resources. Indonesia reaffirmed its support for the continued efforts of the United Nations system to ensure that core resources for operational activities for development were made available on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. Future pledging events should at least ensure political visibility and programme accountability, and an alternative model for pledging should be sought that would reflect the positive aspects of the current mechanism and those of the multi-year funding framework. There was merit in including a pledging event in the agenda of the reconstituted high-level dialogue, but it was important not to overload or dilute that agenda. Other options should be explored, such as incorporating the pledging exercise in a broader-level dialogue, addressing United Nations priorities, including the Millennium development goals and integrated follow-up to the outcomes of major conferences and summits, which could be held in alternate years.

23. As for measures to promote and facilitate South-South cooperation, there had been many achievements over the years, but implementation had been sluggish and far short of expectations. There was a lack of widespread understanding of such cooperation's real potential, of strong institutions to support its programmes and projects, of a South-South flow of information and of adequate human and financial resources. The relevance of South-South cooperation was becoming more urgent in a rapidly interdependent world; at the operational level, the ad hoc approaches employed by various partners, including the United Nations, should be replaced by a new concentration of resources on well-coordinated programmes. The challenge was to initiate programmes and projects which aligned the agenda for South-South cooperation with the Millennium development goals, and to improve the funding base for South-South cooperation by including the Voluntary Trust Fund for South-South Cooperation in the United Nations Pledging Conference.

24. **Mr. Ngo Duc Thang** (Viet Nam) said that South-South cooperation had reached only a modest level and lacked an institutional mandate as well as financial resources. Its potential had not yet been mobilized, and the support of the international community was still weak and inadequate. The work of the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries should be strengthened and fully integrated into United Nations operational activities for development. The United Nations, UNDP, WTO and other specialized agencies should make greater efforts to find appropriate and effective ways and means of assisting the development activities of the South both technically and financially, as well as the efforts of the countries of the South to cooperate with one another. Viet Nam's involvement in South-South cooperation had led to the creation of a tripartite model consisting of two parties from the South and one from donors or international organizations. It had also led to the initiative to develop poor and less-developed inter-State areas in the Mekong subregion, which had been adopted by other ASEAN countries. Such models could be useful to the countries of the North, the United Nations and its agencies, as well as financial institutions, helping South-South cooperation to achieve its full potential.

25. Viet Nam was pleased to note that the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) had been growing steadily and that its programme had produced positive results. It deserved stronger support, as gender and the advancement of women's issues should receive a higher priority in the development agenda. UNIFEM should undertake comprehensive research with a view to finding and encouraging the use of successful models allowing women to generate

economic incomes from a seed fund lent by donors or UNIFEM which allowed them to benefit from the opportunities created by globalization. Viet Nam shared the concern that the annual United Nations Pledging Conference had not been able to mobilize sufficient regular resources, and considered it necessary to consider alternative options. The entire United Nations system should analyse the multi-year funding framework approach with a view to adopting it, because it had had some success in mobilizing funds for WFP, UNDP, UNFPA and UNICEF programmes. Viet Nam agreed that there should be a high-level event on funding for operational activities for development in the context of the General Assembly and in conjunction with the high-level dialogue on strengthening international economic cooperation for development through partnerships.

26. **Mr. Kazemi-Kamyab** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the impact of United Nations operational activities for development must be enhanced by a substantial increase in their funding on a predictable, continuous and assured basis and commensurate with the increasing needs of developing countries. It could be argued that it was necessary to address the lack of political will on the part of the developed countries to commit themselves to development, rather than to try to invent reasons for abolishing annual pledging conferences. His delegation was prepared to consider any effective alternative which ensured an annual commitment to and overall support for funding operational activities for development.

27. Turning to the question of South-South cooperation, he said that the Tehran Consensus, adopted at the tenth meeting of the Intergovernmental Follow-up and Coordination Committee on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries, had lent support to the idea of launching an International Decade on South-South Cooperation and the designation of a United Nations Day for South-South Cooperation; his delegation requested the Secretary-General to establish a high-level expert group to consider those ideas prior to discussion by the General Assembly at its fifty-eighth session. There had been an increasing pattern of cooperation among developing countries but their efforts needed to be assisted by the rest of the international community, whether it be the donor community or the United Nations system and its various components. South-South cooperation was important, but it could not replace North-South cooperation: the two were supposed to be complementary. The separate identity of the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries needed to be maintained, and its programme adequately funded at a level commensurate with its mandate and system-wide responsibilities. The High-Level Committee on the Review of TCDC should in future review all aspects of South-South cooperation, and its name should be changed to the High-Level Committee on South-South Cooperation. Similarly, the UNDP Special Unit for TCDC should be renamed the Special Unit for South-South Cooperation. The capacity of the Special Unit to perform its functions needed to be further strengthened. It was encouraging that a number of developed countries had displayed interest in the triangular approach to South-South cooperation as a way of helping developing countries to overcome the scarcity of resources. It was to be hoped that the UNDP Special Unit would intensify its efforts to mobilize additional financial resources and generate a broad-based partnership among developing countries.

28. **Mr. Savchuk** (Ukraine) said that, in order to ensure that the United Nations system was capable of adequately meeting new development challenges, further sustained efforts were required to coordinate the activities of United Nations funds and programmes, to harmonize and simplify their programming and operational procedures, to strengthen the Resident Coordinator System and to enhance the relationship between the United Nations development agencies and international financial entities, notably the Bretton Woods institutions. Increased attention should be given to the inter-agency aspects of operational activities. Although there had been clear improvements in some areas of development cooperation, there was still a shortfall of core funding which impaired further progress. Additional efforts were essential in order to secure predictable and long-term funding for United Nations operational activities for development.

29. It was his delegation's expectation that the Monterrey Consensus would help to reverse the downward trend of official development assistance. As for the alternative options to the annual United Nations Pledging Conference for Development Activities, Ukraine believed that the introduction and refinement of multi-year funding frameworks would considerably enhance efforts to mobilize resources, and in that context careful consideration should be given to

mandating the Economic and Social Council to devote one session of the high-level meeting of the United Nations operational activities segment to substantive dialogue on funding. It was important for the process of mainstreaming the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and Common Country Assessment into national development strategies and policies to secure broader participation of all relevant United Nations funds and programmes, and full leadership and coordination by national governments at all stages. It was important that capacity-building was being addressed with clear benchmarks and indicators in all Common Country Assessments, United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and country programmes. It was also crucial that opportunities for forging partnership relations with private sector and non-governmental organizations be utilized more fully. UNDP should continue to play a key role in promoting the activities of all United Nations agencies in Ukraine, especially with regard to the United Nations Chernobyl programme and the Crimea Integration and Development Programme. The Government of Ukraine had enjoyed fruitful cooperation with UNICEF, and was particularly pleased with the recent decision to elevate the UNICEF office in Kiev to the status of a country office.

30. **Ms. Whittemore** (United States of America) said that the quick and effective intervention of the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in Afghanistan had brought home the value of the Fund to the lives of women. It worked with equal effectiveness in other parts of the world, enhanced by its partnership with many entities, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). She stressed that full participation of women in economic, political and social life was essential for realization of international development goals.

31. Turning to South-South cooperation, she regretted that technical cooperation among developing countries had achieved little and said that such efforts must be reviewed in the context of international development goals. Her delegation supported United Nations involvement in South-South cooperation to build capacity and develop national strategies to reduce poverty but did not believe that the Organization should be supporting developing countries in promoting bloc positions and a so-called South agenda in global negotiations. The era of North-South negotiations, which had in fact produced few gains for development, was a thing of the past.

32. Technical cooperation played an increasingly important role in the areas of governance and human rights. While agreeing that there could be no development without respect for human rights, she took some exception to the contention that certain biomedical and information technology advances could adversely affect the dignity and human rights of the individual and constitute obstacles to development. Without such advances, the chances of reaching the international development goals would in fact be zero.

33. Technical cooperation among developing countries would be most successful when no longer seen as separate from other forms of cooperation and capacity-building. Her Government's bilateral assistance programmes had long used expertise from developing countries in programmes that it financed in other developing countries and such technical cooperation was not considered to be materially different from other development activities. Some of the recommendations in the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/155, paras. 64-76) seemed likely to keep technical cooperation among developing countries as a marginal activity. However, United Nations agencies, including the UNDP Special Unit for Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries, should be catalysts for South-South cooperation and developing countries themselves should take the lead in reviewing such activities. Rather than create another secretariat, the Special Unit should in fact be expanded. Noting that a fixed annual allocation for the Special Unit had just been approved, she said that decisions on other measures to strengthen South-South cooperation should wait until the situation was clearer.

34. With regard to the Pledging Conference, she found much merit in the suggestions made by the European Union and by Switzerland. Resource mobilization must be accompanied by a review of results and she urged all United Nations agencies to develop multi-year funding frameworks (MYFFs) or similar mechanisms. Her delegation remained sceptical of large ministerial or high-level meetings, which were costly and did not produce the desired results. For example, although the UNDP Ministerial Conference of September 2000 had been a positive event, the results had nevertheless been uneven.

35. **Mr. Lewis** (Antigua and Barbuda), speaking on behalf of the member States of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), associated himself with the statement by the representative of Venezuela on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. He recalled that the CARICOM countries were highly susceptible to the vagaries of the international economic environment, a situation compounded by natural disasters and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. Agencies such as UNDP played a pivotal role in helping them meet their economic and sustainable development objectives and, while they remained committed to results-based development, that approach must not be based on a one-size-fits-all philosophy but on the specific circumstances of each country.

36. At a time when CARICOM countries were facing their most daunting challenges, he regretted that UNDP assistance had been substantially reduced as a result of the decline in its core funding, seriously affecting poverty eradication, social programmes and the most vulnerable groups of society. He therefore expressed gratitude for UNDP efforts to support implementation of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME) and looked forward to continued collaboration with UNDP in regional integration efforts based on best practices in the areas of sustainable development, preparation for the Barbados +10 conference, vulnerability, HIV/AIDS, capacity-building and disaster management.

37. He called for speedy implementation of the global development agenda. Adequate funding must be provided for such efforts, including through changes to the pledging system, which had not achieved timely implementation and tangible results. Although viewed as middle-income countries, many CARICOM members were major recipients of remittances from nationals working abroad; per capita income should not therefore be the principal criterion for determining a country's stage of development. They were also increasingly called upon to assist weaker economies in their subregion and he supported renewed emphasis on cooperation at all levels.

38. He welcomed the UNIFEM focus on gender and HIV/AIDS and its efforts in the Caribbean region and reiterated the CARICOM countries' commitment to children. Member States were participating in immunization programmes, promoting breast-feeding, and prioritizing quality education and the development of programmes and policies aimed at preventing the use of illicit drugs. With the second highest incidence of HIV/AIDS after sub-Saharan Africa, HIV/AIDS continued to be a priority and care for affected children and families was a major component of the regional prevention and management strategy.

39. **Mr. Gospodinov** (Observer for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)) called for the spirit of Monterrey to be given substance by States, international organizations, non-governmental organizations and the private sector. The Federation was working to bring the Monterrey message to the attention of its National Societies. It was also accelerating work to enter into arrangements with other international organizations. For example, five National Societies in Southern Africa had entered into a partnership with the World Food Programme (WFP) in September of that year to provide the basic necessities of life to 13 million people in that region threatened by the scourges of HIV/AIDS and starvation. Also of critical importance for vulnerable people worldwide was the arrangement under which the ProVention Consortium, established under the auspices of the World Bank, was currently housed at the Federation Secretariat in Geneva. The Federation hoped that its work with the World Bank would expand and that links with the consortia of other members, notably the regional development banks, would also be strengthened.

40. Some of the Federation's partnerships were aimed at provision of relief and included development in their programmes, while others were aimed at risk reduction, which had been the theme of the 2002 World Disasters Report. In his foreword to the report, the Secretary-General of the Federation had challenged Governments to add disaster risk reduction targets to existing international development targets. Risk reduction took many forms which were relevant to economic and social development. The Federation participated, for example, in the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (GAVI) and with other partners had been working to develop a Humanitarian Accountability Project based on the need to build national capacity and reinforce accountability.

41. Capacity-building was also a priority for the Federation, which was present in virtually every country in the world. Its National Societies worked to assist the vulnerable in their own as well as other countries and he welcomed the recent United Nations emphasis on partnership, including the Poverty

Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) approach. The Federation had long argued the value of partnerships based on strong national ownership and broad-based participation in policy design and monitoring. It had therefore welcomed the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and was currently exploring the best avenues for promoting national Red Cross and Red Crescent Society cooperation with the African Union in that context.

42. The connection between relief and development had too often been ignored and the effective partnerships must be created at all levels to strengthen the capacity of vulnerable communities, taking into account their needs and expectations in order to transform principles into action and concrete deeds. That was the spirit of Monterrey and would be reflected in the theme of the next International Conference of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent: "Protecting human dignity". The Federation would highlight the need to protect human dignity during the current session of the General Assembly and continue to stress that theme in its work worldwide. It would also undertake wide-ranging consultations which, when combined with its partnership arrangements, would give valuable substance to the Millennium development goals.

43. **Mr. Husain** (Observer for the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)) said the Conference had a considerable stake in South-South cooperation. Like the United Nations, its objective was to promote solidarity and cooperation among its 60 member and observer States. All its member States were in fact from the South. Four member States of the Conference, Egypt, Tunisia, Indonesia and Turkey, were net providers of technical assistance in their various regions, indicating the importance which the Conference attached to South-South cooperation.

44. The strategic objectives of collective self-reliance and increased participation in the world economy had not been realized by most developing countries and he stressed the importance of preventing and ending armed conflicts within and among developing countries. The Conference had both positive and negative experiences to share in conflict resolution and peace-building in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Philippines, Somalia, Tajikistan and elsewhere.

45. He supported the recommendations for action contained in the report of the Secretary-General (A/57/155, paras. 64-76) but believed two were of particular significance. He would welcome the creation of a high-level group of experts (para. 64) to align the South-South cooperation agenda with the Millennium development goals and strengthen the South countries' capacity to pursue development goals; the group should have as wide a geographical representation as possible in order to take into account the different ethnic and cultural communities in the South. He would also welcome collaboration between UNDP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (para. 66) to include peace education in school curricula but suggested that other stakeholders such as the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) should be included in those efforts.

46. **Ms. Nanda** (United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)) thanked members for their comments and advice. She also welcomed in particular the concerns expressed about UNIFEM's lack of resources and noted with appreciation the 8 per cent increase in its core resources. Adequate funding was essential for effective programming as the Fund endeavoured to implement the Millennium development goals, reduce the effects of HIV/AIDS and highlight the contribution of women to peace and security. It would help the fund continue its cooperation with national partners to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and to strengthen programme priorities identified, in particular in programme countries.

The meeting rose at 5 p.m.